

In-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism: Hong Kong's democratization under Chinese sovereignty, 1997–2016

Brian Fong

To cite this article: Brian Fong (2017) In-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism: Hong Kong's democratization under Chinese sovereignty, 1997–2016, *Democratization*, 24:4, 724–750, DOI: [10.1080/13510347.2016.1232249](https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2016.1232249)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2016.1232249>



Published online: 29 Sep 2016.



Submit your article to this journal 



Article views: 1395



View Crossmark data 



Citing articles: 7 



In-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism: Hong Kong's democratization under Chinese sovereignty, 1997–2016

Brian Fong

The Academy of Hong Kong Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

On the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the handover, Hong Kong's transition towards a full democracy remains unsettled. Drawing upon the contemporary theories of hybrid regimes, this article argues that manipulations adopted by electoral authoritarian governments have become increasingly common in Hong Kong today. As Hong Kong's elections, opposition activities, and media have been increasingly put under electoral authoritarian-style manipulations, the city-state is now situated in the "political grey zone" in-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism and its transition into a full democracy remains nowhere in sight. The case study of Hong Kong will help enrich the existing comparative literature on hybrid regimes by developing a new "in-between category" and offering an interesting case of democratization of sub-national polity.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 14 June 2016; Accepted 31 August 2016

KEYWORDS Hybrid regime; electoral authoritarianism; liberal authoritarianism; China; Hong Kong

In the final decades of British colonial rule, the colonial government had put in place a liberal authoritarian regime in Hong Kong and such a liberal tradition has been largely maintained in the initial years of the post-handover period. Nevertheless, in view of Beijing's attempt to strengthen its oversight over Hong Kong in recent years, systematic manipulations widely adopted by electoral authoritarian governments have become increasingly applied in Hong Kong today. Instead of transiting from a liberal authoritarian regime into a full democracy, Hong Kong is increasingly situated in the grey zone in-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism. The case of Hong Kong will help enrich the existing comparative literature on hybrid regimes by developing a new "in-between category" and offering an interesting case of democratization of sub-national polity.

The remainder of this article will be organized into four sections. First, I will review the theories of hybrid regimes, situating this article in the theoretical context of democratization literature. Second, I will trace Hong Kong's evolution into a liberal authoritarian regime in the final decades of British colonial rule. Third, by drawing upon Henry E. Hale's analytical framework on electoral authoritarianism I will put forward

an argument that Hong Kong's elections, opposition activities, and media have been increasingly put under systematic manipulations commonly found in electoral authoritarian regimes. Fourth, I will discuss the prospects of Hong Kong's democratization and the theoretical implications of the case study of Hong Kong.

Hybrid regimes, electoral authoritarianism, and liberal authoritarianism: The theoretical context

In recent years, the existence of a large number of “hybrid regimes”, which by definition combines both democratic and authoritarian elements, has increasingly attracted the attention of comparative scholars.¹ Conceptually, the notion of hybrid regimes is built upon two procedural dimensions of democracy as advanced by Robert Dahl, that is, *political contestation for public offices* and *public participation in politics*.² O'Donnell and Schmitter conceptualized political regimes staying in the grey zone between full democracies and full authoritarianism as *dictablandas* (political regimes that feature liberalization of public participation in politics but without the existence of a competitive election) and *democraduras* (political regimes which put in place competitive popular elections but restrict people's freedom to participate in politics).³ Subsequent scholars conceptualized democratization as involving two distinct processes, that is, *constitutional liberalization* (the limitation of government powers and protection of civil liberties through a constitutional order based on rule of law) and *electoral popularization* (the insertion of popular power into the government by means of elections), and identified two typical forms of hybrid regimes, namely *liberal authoritarianism* (also called “constitutional oligarchic regimes”) and *electoral authoritarianism* (also called “electoral autocratic regimes”).⁴

Before the 2000s, hybrid regimes were usually described by political scientists as transitional regimes moving towards full democracy.⁵ Such a “transitional paradigm” reflected a period of optimism towards democratic transition in the West.⁶ But, starting from the 2000s, this “transitional paradigm” has been challenged as comparative scholars have queried that many hybrid regimes have stayed in the grey zone for a long time⁷ and transition from authoritarian rule does not necessarily mean following a linear path towards full democracy.⁸ Empirical studies conducted by Levitsky and Way on 37 post-Cold War hybrid regimes showed that their trajectories were diverse: According to Levitsky and Way, 14 of the hybrid regimes under their study have been fully democratized (for example, Mexico and Taiwan), 12 of them are unstable hybrid regimes experiencing alteration of different authoritarian rulers (for example, Georgia and Senegal) and the remaining 11 hybrid regimes are stable (for example, Malaysia, Russia, and Zimbabwe).⁹ The analysis of Hong Kong's democratization in this article will make a contribution to this emerging literature by providing another illustrative case study showing the diverse trajectories of hybrid regimes.

Moving towards a liberal authoritarian regime: Hong Kong's political transition in the final decades of British colonial rule

In the context of comparative studies, Hong Kong is an interesting case of a hybrid regime. While political powers were concentrated in the hands of the colonial administration headed by the governor, and the people of Hong Kong were denied the rights to choose their own government, since the founding of the colony Hong Kong has been

a free port with a strong tradition of respecting “due process” and “rule of law”. The press in colonial Hong Kong was generally free and practice of religious worship was unrestricted.¹⁰

In the final decades of colonial rule, the British colonial government even set up independent watchdogs like the Independent Commission Against Corruption (1974), Ombudsman (1989), and Equal Opportunities Commission (1994) to restrain its own power.¹¹ In 1991, enactment of the Bill of Rights Ordinance further provided a comprehensive legal code for protecting civil liberties typically found in Western democracies. To use the words of theorists of hybrid regimes, Hong Kong had basically gone through a period of constitutional liberalization from the 1970s to the 1990s, by which government powers have been limited and civil liberties have been better protected through a constitutional order based on the rule of law.

The handover of sovereignty from Britain to China on 1 July 1997 did not change Hong Kong’s liberal authoritarian regime as various civil liberties have been guaranteed under the Basic Law.¹² In contrast, limited electoral franchises, mainly reserved for a certain number of seats in the Legislative Council, have been guaranteed under the Basic Law. Nevertheless, the Chief Executive, head of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, remains handpicked by an election committee controlled by Beijing.¹³ By maintaining a high degree of civil liberties and incorporating some elements of popular elections, the HKSAR in its initial years was fundamentally a liberal authoritarian regime featuring limited competitive election elements.¹⁴

The growing trend of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations: Hong Kong’s politics under Chinese sovereignty

Since the handover, limited expansion of electoral popularization has been achieved at Legislative Council and District Council level, giving Hongkongese greater chances to elect their representatives in these two bodies. For the Legislative Council, about 54.71% of seats are returned by popular elections after the introduction of five District Council (Second) functional constituencies by 2012, while, for the District Council, about 94.1% of seats are returned by popular elections after the abolition of all appointed seats by 2015 (Tables 1 and 2). In 2007, China’s National People’s Congress Standing Committee’s (NPCSC) promulgation of a timetable for implementing universal suffrage was seen as another breakthrough for Hong Kong’s democratization. Some scholars, like Zhang, followed the transitional paradigm and argued that after the promulgation of a timetable for universal suffrage, Hong Kong will move towards a “meaningful democracy” as long as moderate democrats and Beijing can engage in pragmatic negotiations.¹⁵ Is the case of Hong Kong consistent with the “transitional paradigm”?

This article goes beyond the transitional paradigm and examines Hong Kong’s democratization by making reference to the diverse trajectories of hybrid regimes as shown in the democratization literature. As pointed out by Wigell, the two separate processes of constitutional liberalization and electoral popularization do not always go hand in hand.¹⁶ Therefore, when discussing Hong Kong’s democratization we should not overlook possible regime trajectories other than a straightforward transition into a full democracy – these are important issues that have not been adequately discussed under existing local literature.¹⁷

The principal argument of this article is that although Hong Kong has experienced a period of gradual expansion of electoral popularization after 1997, concurrently, its

Table 1. The expansion of electoral popularization of Legislative Council (from 1998 to 2016).

Session	(1) Election Committee		(2) Traditional functional constituencies (Returned by corporate electors/professional members)		(3) New functional constituencies (Returned by popular elections)		(4) Geographical constituencies (Returned by popular elections)		Total number of seats	Percentage of seats returned by popular elections (%)
	Number of seats	Number of registered electors	Number of seats	Number of registered electors	Number of seats	Number of registered electors	Number of seats	Number of registered electors		
1998–2000	10	800	30	139,000	0	–	20	2,795,000	60	33.33
2000–2004	6	794	30	175,600	0	–	24	3,055,400	60	40
2004–2008	0	–	30	199,539	0	–	30	3,207,227	60	50
2008–2012	0	–	30	229,861	0	–	30	3,372,007	60	50
2012–2016	0	–	30	240,735	5	3,466,201	35	3,466,201	70	57.14

(1) This Election Committee was the same as the Chief Executive Election Committee (which mainly comprised pro-establishment elites).

(2) Traditional functional constituencies either represent socio-economic sectoral interests (the electors are corporate members of major organizations representative of the relevant sectors, for example, Insurance Functional Constituency and Transport Functional Constituency) or professional groups (the electors are individual professionals with recognized qualifications and professional membership, for example, Legal Functional Constituency and Accountancy Functional Constituency).

(3) New functional constituencies were first introduced in the 2012 Legislative Council general election. Candidates must be elected district councillors, and electors are registered geographical constituency electors who will vote on the basis of universal suffrage with the whole of Hong Kong as a single constituency.

(4) Under geographical constituencies all eligible persons aged 18 or above have the right to be registered as electors and to vote in one of the five geographical constituency elections on the basis of universal suffrage.

Source: Reports on Legislative Council by the Electoral Affairs Commission, Various Years (<http://www.eac.gov.hk>).

Table 2. The expansion of electoral popularization of District Council (from 1999 to 2015).

Session	(1) Appointed members	(2) Ex-officio rural committee members	(3) Elected members (Returned by popular elections)		Total number of seats	Percentage of seats returned by popular elections (%)
	Number of seats	Number of seats	Number of seats	Number of registered electors		
1999–2003	102	27	390	2,832,524	519	75.14
2003–2007	102	27	400	2,973,612	529	76
2007–2011	102	27	405	3,295,826	534	76
2011–2015	68	27	412	3,560,535	507	81
2015–2019	0	27	431	3,689,360	458	94.10

(1) Appointed members were appointed by the Chief Executive.

(2) Ex-officio rural committee members are representatives of indigenous residents in the New Territories of Hong Kong.

(3) Elected members are elected by registered electors through the simple majority voting system on the basis of universal suffrage.

Source: Reports on District Council elections by the Electoral Affairs Commission, Various Years (<http://www.eac.gov.hk>).

elections, opposition activities, and media have been increasingly subject to systematic manipulations resulting in the contraction of the degree of constitutional liberalization. As a consequence, instead of transiting into a full democratic regime featuring both popular elections and civil liberties, Hong Kong is now situated in the “political grey zone” in-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism and its transition into a full democracy remains nowhere in sight under Chinese sovereignty. In this connection, Hale clearly pointed out that extensive application of manipulative practices, which aim at defeating opposition forces in different arenas and helping the incumbent government to consolidate its hold on power, is the defining feature that differentiates electoral authoritarianism from full democracy and full authoritarianism.¹⁸ Based on established research on electoral authoritarianism, Hale summarized a list of manipulative practices that embody the behaviour of electoral authoritarian governments, including distributing spoils among voters, manoeuvring voter rolls, creating fake opposition, attacking opposition by pseudo-civil society groups, practising selective prosecution, pressurizing opposition supporters by threatening means, and manipulating media.¹⁹ Hale’s list provides a useful analytical framework for us to investigate the growing trend of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations in Hong Kong in recent years.

Distributing spoils among voters, manoeuvring voter rolls and creating fake opposition²⁰

Under electoral authoritarian regimes, incumbent governments hold regular multiparty elections but strive to defeat opposition parties in elections by various manipulative practices. One of the usual manipulations adopted by electoral authoritarian governments is by making use of its greater access to different state and societal resources, to build a stronger voter support base through distributing spoils among voters and even directly buying votes.²¹ For example, in Malaysia, government candidates will solicit support by approaching rural villagers with gifts such as T-shirts, toys, and appliances. In New Order Indonesia, “festivals of democracy” were organized by government where voters were served with musical entertainment and given gifts.²²

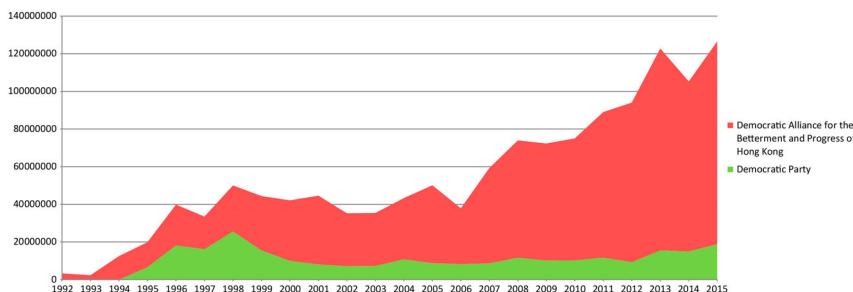


Figure 1. Annual income of two flagship political parties in Hong Kong. Source: Author's own research based on the annual financial statements of DAB and DP (available at Companies Registry's Cyber Search Centre: <http://www.icris.cr.gov.hk>).

Note: All the figures are denoted in Hong Kong dollars. Because there is no party law in Hong Kong, political parties are usually registered as "companies" under the Company Ordinance. DAB was established in 1992 while the DP was established in 1994.

In Hong Kong today, although direct forms of vote buying are not obvious, pro-government parties have gradually expanded their voter support base by making use of their resource advantages for distributing material rewards. A closer examination of the financial position of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) and the Democratic Party (DP), the two flagship political parties from the pro-government camp and the pro-democracy camp respectively, and head-to-head election competitors, is illustrative (Figures 1 and 2). While the pro-democracy parties are still struggling to secure business donations due to the close partnership between Beijing's and Hong Kong's business sectors,²³ in recent years DAB has made best use of its close connections with pro-Beijing businessmen to establish its clear recourse advantage vis-à-vis DP, and now DAB has almost outspent the DP by 10-to-1.²⁴ Thanks to the donations and sponsorships from pro-Beijing businessmen, DAB extensively distributes spoils to grassroots voters, such as providing food and gifts, offering meals, and organizing tours. While DP has tried to compete with DAB by providing similar constituency services, DAB has out-competed democrats because of its clear advantages in financial and staffing resources.²⁵ By virtue of its overwhelming resource advantages in spoils distribution, the pro-government camp has successfully built stronger district networks and developed more extensive lists of voter contact,

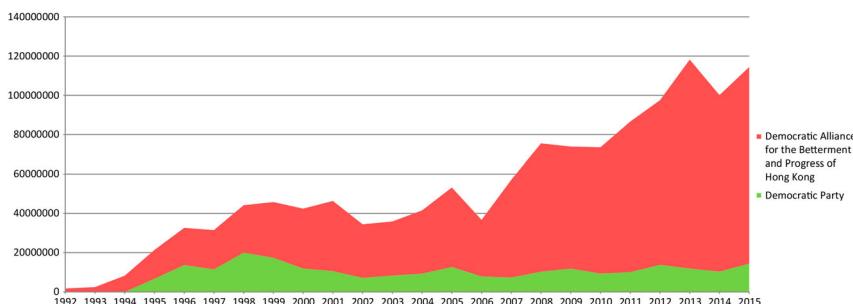


Figure 2. Annual expenditure of two flagship political parties in Hong Kong. Source: Author's own research based on the annual financial statements of DAB and DP (available at Companies Registry's Cyber Search Centre: <http://www.icris.cr.gov.hk>).

Note: All the figures are denoted in Hong Kong dollars. Because there is no party law in Hong Kong, political parties are usually registered as "companies" under the Company Ordinance. DAB was established in 1992 while the DP was established in 1994.

enabling them to better coordinate their “Get-out-the-vote” drives during District Council and Legislative Council elections.²⁶

Apart from distributing spoils among voters, comparative literature shows that it is also common for electoral authoritarian governments to “steal the election” through manoeuvring voter rolls.²⁷ For example, in Malaysia the National Front government will manipulate electoral rolls by shifting voters to other electoral districts or dropping them from the roll. “Phantom voters” with fake identity cards and false addresses are common.²⁸

Such a subtle method of electoral manipulation is no longer uncommon in Hong Kong today. In the 2011 District Council election and the 2012 Legislative Council election, local media revealed a number of suspected cases of “vote-rigging” by the pro-government camp, such as the registration of “13 voters with seven different surnames” in an apartment in Mei Foo owned by Leung Ping (a member of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference),²⁹ the registration of “11 voters all with different surnames” in a 400-inch warehouse in Mong Kok,³⁰ the registration of nearly a hundred voters in a construction site in Sheung Wan,³¹ and the registration of 20 voters in a vacated nursing home in Sai Wan.³² In the most recent 2015 District Council election, local media even discovered an unusual increase in the number of registered voters in elderly care homes located in different constituencies. Some of these elderly care homes were found to be operated by people closely connected with the pro-government camp. The elderly, many of them of low cognitive ability, were seen being transported to the polling stations by shuttle buses arranged by these elderly care homes.³³ The number of registered elderly in these suspected cases of “vote-rigging” seems to be decisive in some neck-to-neck races (Table 3).

While distributing spoils among voters and manoeuvring voter rolls are orthodox ways adopted by electoral authoritarian governments to defeat opposition parties, a more advanced method is the creation of fake opposition. Some electoral authoritarian governments are masters of manufacturing fake opposition politicians and parties (who are usually critical of governments publicly but are actually loyal supporters of the incumbent regime) as a means to channel or divert opposition votes.³⁴ For example, in Russia, the People’s Party, which ran in the 2003 Duma election on a set of populist initiatives such as the restoration of the death penalty and re-criminalization of homosexuality, was in reality a project initiated by the Kremlin to capture protest votes and to channel the opposition’s votes.

The Hong Kong model of “fake opposition” is the creation of a group of “fake independent candidates”, who appear to be non-partisan but indeed are members of the pro-government camp, at Legislative Council and District Council elections. The typical examples are the campaigns of Priscilla Leung and Paul Tse in the 2008 and 2012 Legislative elections respectively, when both first ran for directly-elected seats in geographical constituencies. By presenting themselves as “independents” and moderate critics of the HKSAR government both Leung and Tse were elected conveniently, amongst other factors, by channelling votes from the pro-democracy camp (Table 4). Nevertheless, both of them were subsequently revealed by the media as having the blessing and support of the pro-government camp.³⁵ Such a strategy of nurturing “fake independent candidates” has proved to be quite effective for the pro-government camp as a whole to gain ground in geographical constituencies by winning the “last seats” under the proportional representation system.³⁶ Apart from the Legislative Council elections, the pro-government camp also starts to more extensively apply this strategy to District Council elections. For example, in the most recent 2015 District

Table 3. Number of registered voters in elderly care homes located in several 2015 District Council election constituencies.

Constituencies	Number of registered voters in elderly care homes (2011)	Number of registered voters in elderly care homes (2015)	Percentage change (%)	Number of votes received by candidate in pro-democracy camp	Number of votes received by candidate in pro-government camp	Elderly care homes operated by people with close connections with the pro-government camp within the constituencies
Lai Chi Kok North	11	112	918	Chum Tak-shing: 1,173 (elected)	Wong King: 877	–
Tai Po Hui	92	295	221	Chou Wing-mui: 865	Li Kwok-ying: 1,096 (elected)	Two elderly care homes namely Kwong Fuk Elderly Care Center and Shun Fuk Home for Aged have been involved. Lee Ping-yung, Members of Hainam Province Political Consultative Conference and Lam Shu-yuk, Director of Kowloon Kit Yeung Clansmen General Association, are the Directors of these two elderly care homes respectively.
Hing Fong	40	114	185	Ng Kam-sing: 2,701 (elected)	Leung Kar-ming: 2,629	–
Belcher	32	87	172	Yeung Sui-yin: 2,328	Yip Wing-shing: 2,397 (elected)	–
Sai Ying Pun	44	111	152	Ng Wing-tak: 1,204	Lo Yee-hang: 1,790 (elected)	Two elderly care homes namely Hong Yee Elderly Center and Hang Fok Home for the Aged have been involved. Chan Mei-sze, Vice-President of Hong Kong Federation of Hainan Community Organizations, is the Director of these two elderly care homes.
Hung Hom	87	162	86	Yum Kwok-tung: 1,173	Lam Tak-shing: 1,544 (elected)	–
Tai Pak Tin	195	276	42	Tsui Sang-hung: 1,997	Kwok Fu-yung: 2,884 (elected)	–

Source: Adapted from *Apple Daily*, "Increase in Voters in Elderly Care Homes Key to Election Success for Establishment Candidates (in Chinese)".

Table 4. Creation of “fake independent candidates” in Legislative Council elections.

Year of election	Number and percentage of votes received by Priscilla Leung	Number and percentage of votes received by candidates of pro-democracy political groups ^a	Number and percentage of votes received by candidates of pro-government political groups ^b	Number and percentage of votes received by other candidates
2008 Kowloon West geographical constituency election [5 seats]	19,914 (9.64%) [Elected]	119,942 (58.06%) [3 candidates elected]	52,024 (25.18%) [1 candidate elected]	14,703 (7.12%)
2004 Kowloon West geographical constituency election [4 seats]	–	164,100 (72.07%) [3 candidates elected]	61,770 (27.13%) [1 candidate elected]	1,824 (0.8%)
2000 Kowloon West geographical constituency election [4 seats]	–	136,257 (76.46%) [3 candidates elected]	41,942 (23.54%) [1 candidate elected]	0
Election	Number and percentage of votes received by Paul Tse ^b	Number and percentage of votes received by candidates of pro-democracy political groups ^a	Number and percentage of votes received by candidates of pro-government political groups ^b	Number and percentage of votes received by other candidates
2012 Kowloon East geographical constituency election [5 seats]	38,546 (13.54%) [Elected]	149,294 (52.42%) [2 candidates elected]	88,239 (30.98%) [2 candidates elected]	8,703 (3.06%)
2008 Kowloon East geographical constituency election [4 seats]	–	132,453 (56.07%) [2 candidates elected]	103,792 (43.93%) [2 candidates elected]	0
2004 Kowloon East geographical constituency election [5 seats]	–	186,116 (63.31%) [3 candidates elected]	107,870 (36.39%) [2 candidates elected]	0
2000 Kowloon East geographical constituency election [4 seats]	–	103,863 (45.30%) [2 candidates elected]	108,587 (47.36%) [2 candidates elected]	16,828 (7.34%)

Source: Election figures are obtained from the website of the Electoral Affairs Commission: <http://www.eac.gov.hk>

^a “Pro-democracy political groups” refers to the Democratic Party, Civic Party [previously Article 45 Concern Group], League of Social Democrats, People’s Power, Association for Democracy & People’s Livelihood, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Neighbourhood & Workers Service Centre and Frontier.

^b “Pro-establishment political groups” refers to the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, Liberal Party, Business and Professional Alliance [previously Economic Synergy], Professional Forum [previously The Alliance/Breakfast Group], Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions, New Century Forum, New People’s Party [previously Savantas Policy Institute] or Hong Kong Progressive Alliance [disbanded].

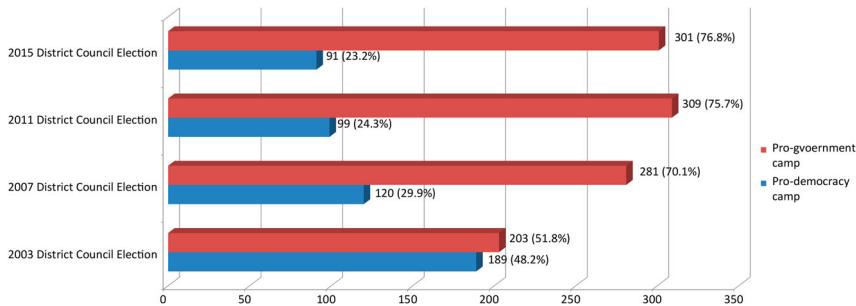


Figure 3. Seat share of the pro-democracy camp and pro-government camp in 18 District Councils. Source: The 2003, 2007 and 2011 figures are adapted from *Apple Daily*, “10 Years of ‘Ser Zai Beng Zhong’ Have Undermined the Support Base of Democrats, (in Chinese)”; 2015 figures are adapted from *Apple Daily*, “Sudden Increase of 93 Voters in Cambridge Nursing Homes, Half of Them Have No Cognitive Ability (in Chinese).” District Council election website: <http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/dc2015/trend/-5167351625691534>.

Notes: “Pro-democracy political groups” refers to the Democratic Party, Civic Party [previously Article 45 Concern Group], League of Social Democrats, People’s Power, Association for Democracy & People’s Livelihood, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Neighbourhood & Workers Service Centre and Frontier. “Pro-establishment political groups” refers to the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, Liberal Party, Business and Professional Alliance [previously Economic Synergy], Professional Forum [previously The Alliance/Breakfast Group], Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions, New Century Forum, New People’s Party [previously Savantas Policy Institute] or Hong Kong Progressive Alliance [disbanded].

Council election, local media revealed that altogether 384 candidates (out of the total 943 candidates) declared themselves as “independents” or “not affiliated to any political party” and among them 88 candidates were found to be active members of pro-government political groups.³⁷

To sum up, the growing application of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations in Hong Kong’s electoral arena is obvious after the handover. The remarkable improvement of the performance of the pro-government camp at recent District Council and Legislative Council elections could provide us with hints about the actual impacts of these manipulative practices, amongst other factors. At District Council level, in the initial years of the HKSAR period the pro-democracy camp was neck-and-neck with the pro-government camp in terms of the number of seats; but in recent elections the pro-government camp gradually gained ground and now it has already established a supermajority in the 18 District Councils (Figure 3). At Legislative Council level, since 1991 when geographical constituency seats had been introduced into the Legislative Council, the pro-democracy camp consistently maintained about 60% of the popular vote and obtained most of these seats; but, in the 2012 Legislative Council general election, the pro-government camp was already neck-and-neck with the democrats in terms of the number of seats (Figure 4) and the popular vote share of the pro-democracy camp has been reduced to about 55%.³⁸ To use the words of Levitsky and Way,³⁹ District Council and Legislative Council elections have increasingly become “an uneven playing field” for Hong Kong’s democrats.

Attacking opposition, selective prosecution, and pressurizing opposition supporters

To contain the influence of opposition activities, electoral authoritarian governments usually employ different forms of suppression. While in some electoral authoritarian regimes the containment of opposition activities may take the form of outright oppression, such as barring opposition groups from registration and detaining opposition

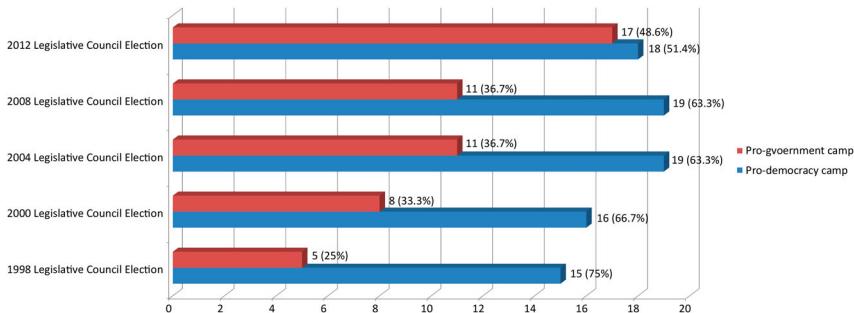


Figure 4. Seat share of the pro-democracy camp and pro-government camp in geographical constituency elections of the Legislative Council. Source: Author's own research based on the election statistics available on the website of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Link: <http://www.eac.gov.hk>).

Notes: "Pro-democracy political groups" refers to the Democratic Party, Civic Party [previously Article 45 Concern Group], League of Social Democrats, People's Power, Association for Democracy & People's Livelihood, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Neighbourhood & Workers Service Centre and Frontier. "Pro-establishment political groups" refers to the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, Liberal Party, Business and Professional Alliance [previously Economic Synergy], Professional Forum [previously The Alliance/Breakfast Group], Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions, New Century Forum, New People's Party [previously Savantas Policy Institute] or Hong Kong Progressive Alliance [disbanded].

politicians by virtue of Internal Security Acts,⁴⁰ a more common way is the application of intimate manipulations,⁴¹ including attacking opposition figures and hindering their activities through pseudo-civil society groups,⁴² imposing selective legal sanctions against opposition figures through an elaborate set of laws,⁴³ and pressurizing opposition supporters by threatening means.⁴⁴ In Hong Kong today, although opposition groups can still be registered under the Societies Ordinance and can organize political activities without fear of being prohibited by national security law, the above-mentioned intimate manipulations are no longer uncommon.

In recent years, the pro-government camp has become increasingly active in attacking pro-democracy opposition by pseudo-civil society groups with a view to counteracting their activities and mobilizing support for the HKSAR government (Table 5). Initially, pro-government parties like DAB and HKFTU took the lead in organizing these counter-mobilization activities. Starting from 2012, several "non-government organizations" namely "Caring Hong Kong Power" (*Aihu Xianggang Liliang*), "Voice of Loving Hong Kong" (*Aigang Zhisheng*), "Sound of Silence" (*Chenmo Zhisheng*), "Take Action" (*Qixin Xingdong*), "Justice League" (*Zhengyi Lianmeng*), and "Defend Hong Kong Campaign" (*Baowei Xianggang Yundong*) have been formed. These

Table 5. Counter-mobilization activities of pro-government organizations.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of counter-mobilization activities	4	19	9	28	61

Source: Author's own research which is based on the content analysis of all local newspapers, namely *Apple Daily*, *Ming Pao*, *Oriental Daily*, *The Sun*, *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, *Hong Kong Economic Times*, *Singtao Daily*, *Sing Pao*, *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*, *Hong Kong Daily*, *Ta Kung Po*, *Wen Wei Po*, *Metropolis Daily*, *AM730*, *Sharp Daily*, and *Sky Post*. The essence of the content analysis was to search all the newspaper reports with the Chinese keywords of "Demonstration (Shiwei)/Protest (Kanhyi)/March (Youxing)/Assembly (Jihui)/Petition (Qin-gyung)/Sit-in (Jingzuo)/Hunger-strike (Jueshi)/Signature Campaign (Lianshu)/Strike (Bagong, Beke, Bashi)" in the WiseNews electronic platform (<http://wisenews.wisers.net>) and to code those social protest events that are organized for the purposes of supporting government officials/government policies and/or counteracting the activities of the pro-democracy camp.

organizations staged a number of high-profile social actions to support the HKSAR government, intimidate opposition politicians, and disturb the activities of the pro-democracy camp. For example, ahead of an anti-government New Year Day protest planned by the pro-democracy camp, Caring Hong Kong Power organized a rally on 30 December 2012 to voice support for Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and condemn the democrats as “destabilizing and foreign-power-backed forces”.⁴⁵ Another example was that in 7 April 2013 during a universal suffrage forum organized by the pro-democracy camp, dozens of activists from the Voice of Loving Hong Kong heckled speakers by rude language and also hurled abuse at pro-democracy politicians attending the event, finally forcing the organizer to halt the forum.⁴⁶ Obviously, the aims of these counter-mobilization activities are to hinder the political activities hosted by the pro-democracy camp and also to neutralize the voices of opposition politicians.⁴⁷

Apart from facing attacks from pseudo-civil society groups, pro-democracy activists are now subject to higher risk of selective prosecution by the police. Since the handover, Hong Kong has been nicknamed “the city of protest” by the international media. While protests are still regular fixtures of Hong Kong’s political scene, in recent years more and more protesters have been arrested and prosecuted. Certainly the rising number of protesters prosecuted and arrested does not directly hint at greater government oppression (because the figures may also reflect the growing radicalism of protesters to challenge the police); selective prosecutions are more attributable to the increasing number of protesters prosecuted by the police under the Public Order Ordinance (Table 6). In recent years, more and more protesters have been prosecuted by the police for “unlawful assembly” under the Public Order Ordinance, and such a legal charge is arguably a “vaguely worded law” because it empowers the police to prosecute protestors so long as three or more persons assemble together and conduct themselves in a manner that may result in “a breach of the peace” – regardless of whether such a protest was originally permitted by the police by virtue of “notice of no objection” under the Public Order Ordinance.⁴⁸ This has given rise to the concern that the police is intending to deter pro-democracy protestors by imposing tougher legal sanctions through an elaborate set of laws because “unlawful assembly” carries a harsher penalty (maximum penalty is five years’ imprisonment) than other legal charges like “assaults, resists or refuses to assist police officer acting in the execution of duty” under the Police Force Ordinance (maximum penalty is six months’ imprisonment) which was previously more often used by the police under similar situations.⁴⁹ An illustrative example was that five core members of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China were prosecuted and arrested by the police for taking part in an “unlawful assembly” inside the compound of the Liaison Office in March 2010.⁵⁰

Pressuring backers of the pro-democracy camp by threatening means is also increasingly common, and pro-democracy and liberal media are usual targets. In recent years, a number of violent attacks have been made against pro-democracy and liberal media practitioners, including an attack on the *iSun Affairs* publisher Chen Ping by two baton-wielding men in June 2013, the ramming of a car into the front gate of the home of Next Media Group owner Jimmy Lai in June 2013, a chopper attack on the former *Ming Pao* chief editor Kevin Lau in February 2014, “white terror” experienced by *House News* founder Tony Tsoi who said he was “frightened” and decided to close down the news website in July 2014, the blocking of the passage of the Next Media Group’s headquarters by a group of anti-Occupy Central Movement activists in October 2014, petrol bomb attacks on the entrance gates of Next Media Group Headquarters and Jimmy Lai’s home in January 2015.⁵¹

Table 6. Number of persons arrested and prosecuted during public meetings/possessions.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of persons arrested during public meetings/processions	0	3	7 ^a	23	30	39	30	57	444	60	84	1726
Number of persons prosecuted in respect of public meetings/processions	2	1	7	7	26	19	14	15	55	35	41	209
Number of persons prosecuted under Cap. 245 Public Order Ordinance in respect of public meetings/processions	0	0	2	0	7	0	8	2	46	8	13	16

^aExcluding 1151 persons who were arrested for unlawful assembly during the 6th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Hong Kong in 2005.

Source: Official figures provided by the Hong Kong Police Force in November 2014.

Media manipulation

To contain the influence of opposition forces, it is common for electoral authoritarian governments to bias media content in favour of the incumbent regime through manipulating the media. Media manipulation under electoral authoritarian regimes can take the direct form of state ownership of major media corporations, or through an indirect form by which pro-government businessmen own and run major media corporations.⁵² Examples of the former can be found in countries such as Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, and Zambia where the governments monopolize broadcast media including television and radio⁵³; while examples of the latter can be found in Malaysia where major newspapers and television stations are controlled by companies closely linked to the governing Barisan Nasional coalition.⁵⁴

In Hong Kong, media tycoons have been the targets of Beijing's united front work since the transitional period of the 1980s and 1990s,⁵⁵ but the political and economic co-option of media tycoons has been more significantly expanded since 1997. In recent years, there have been a number of changes to the ownership of media corporations and most of the television companies and newspapers are now owned and run by pro-Beijing business tycoons who have been politically co-opted by the Chinese government into its united front organizations, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conferences (CPPCC)⁵⁶ (Table 7). For other media, such as TVB and the *South China Morning Post*, although their owners Chan Kwok-keung and Kuok Hock-nien have not been formally co-opted by Beijing as CPPCC members, their business conglomerates have substantial business interests in Mainland China⁵⁷ (Table 8). Through political and economic co-option of Hong Kong media tycoons, the Chinese government has effectively brought almost all of the mainstream printed and electronic media into its united front⁵⁸ and established the leverage to exert indirect pressure on editors and reporters to censor sensitive topics.⁵⁹ In recent years the Hong Kong media have not been short of prominent examples of self-censorship by which sensitive topics or unfavourable coverage of the Chinese government and HKSAR government have been downplayed or removed (Table 9). The erosion of press freedom in Hong Kong has been fully reflected in the deterioration in its global press freedom ranking; Hong Kong is now considered as having only partial media freedom (Table 10).

Summing up: In-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism

The empirical analysis as presented in the preceding paragraphs shows that since the handover, elections, opposition activities, and media in Hong Kong have increasingly been manipulated in ways similar to electoral authoritarian regimes. But it must be stressed that the *growing trend of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations* in Hong Kong does not amount to its *transition into a formal electoral authoritarian regime*. As classically defined by Andreas Schedler, electoral authoritarian regimes

play the game of multiparty elections by holding regular elections for the chief executive and a national legislative assembly. Yet they violate the liberal-democratic principles of freedom and fairness so profoundly and systematically as to render elections instruments of authoritarian rule rather instruments of democracy.⁶⁰

Table 7. Political co-option of media tycoons by the Chinese government.

Media	Business family	Major investor/key person	Political connection with Beijing
<i>Televisions and radios</i>			
Cable TV	Woo Kwong-ching's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woo Kwong-ching is currently Chairman of the Wharf (Holdings) Limited, which is the ultimate controlling shareholder of Cable TV (i.e. i-CABLE Communications Limited). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woo Kwong-ching served as a member of the Standing Committee of the 10th, 11th and 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
Asia Television	Cha Chi-man's family and Wang Zheng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cha Mou-sing, son of Cha Chi-man, is currently Chairman of Mingly Corporation, which acquired the controlling stake of Asia Television in 2007. A Mainland businessman Wang Zheng joined Asia Television in 2010 as a "major investor". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cha Mou-sing served as a member of the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Wang Zheng also served as member of the 10th and 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
Now TV	Li Ka-shing's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Li Tzar-kai, the second son of Li Ka-shing, is currently the Chairman of PCCW Limited. PCCW Limited owns and runs Now TV. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Li Tzar-kai served as a member of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
Metro Radio Hong Kong	Li Ka-shing's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Li Tzar-kuoi, the eldest son of Li Ka-shing, is currently Vice-Chairman of Cheung Kong Holdings Limited and Hutchison Whampoa Limited. Metro Radio is wholly owned by Cheung Kong Holdings Limited and Hutchison Whampoa Limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Li Tzar-kai served as a member of 10th, 11th and 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
Digital Broadcasting Corporation	Wong Cho-bau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wong Cho-bau is currently major investor of the Digital Broadcasting Corporation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wong Cho-bau served as a member of 11th and 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
<i>Newspapers</i>			
<i>Oriental Daily News</i>	Ma Sik-chun's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma Ching-Kwan, son of Ma Sik-chun, is currently Honorary Chairman of the Oriental Press Group Limited. The Oriental Press Group Limited owns and runs Oriental Daily News. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma Ching-Kwan served as a member of 10th and 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
<i>The Sun</i>	Ma Sik-chun's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma Ching-Kwan, son of Ma Sik-chun, is currently Honorary Chairman of the Oriental Press Group Limited. The Oriental Press Group Limited owns and runs The Sun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma Ching-Kwan served as a member of 10th and 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	Ho Tsu-kwok's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ho Tsu-kwok is currently Chairman of Sing Tao News Corporation Limited. The Sing Tao News Corporation Limited owns and runs the Sing Tao Daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ho Tsu-kwok served as a member of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
<i>Headline Daily</i>	Ho Tsu-kwok's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ho Tsu-kwok is currently Chairman of Sing Tao News Corporation Limited. The Sing Tao News Corporation Limited owns and runs the Headline Daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ho Tsu-kwok served as a member of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

(Continued)

Table 7. Continued.

Media	Business family	Major investor/key person	Political connection with Beijing
<i>The Standard</i>	Ho Tsu-kwok's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ho Tsu-kwok is currently Chairman of Sing Tao News Corporation Limited. The Sing Tao News Corporation Limited owns and runs The Standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ho Tsu-kwok served as a member of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.
<i>Hong Kong Economic Journal</i>	Li Ka-shing's family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Li Tzar-kai, the second son of Li Ka-shing, owns a trust company called Clermont Media Limited. The Clermont Media Limited bought half of Hong Kong Economic Journal shares from its founder Lam Shan-muk in 2006 and bought all the remaining shares in 2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Li Tzar-kai served as a member of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Source: Author's own research based on the information available at the websites of the companies and also official homepages of the National Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (<http://www.cppcc.gov.cn>) and Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (<http://www.bjzx.gov.cn>) [Accessed in December 2014].

Hong Kong today is still not an electoral authoritarian regime in the strict orthodox sense of its absence of regular popular elections for the Chief Executive and all the seats of the Legislative Council. In terms of political transition, it is more accurate to say that as a consequence of limited expansion of electoral popularization (as embodied by expansion of popular-elected seats in the Legislative Council and District Council), together with contraction of constitutional liberalization (as embodied by a growing trend of authoritarian-style manipulations in elections, opposition activities, and the media) after 1997, Hong Kong is now situated in the grey zone between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism and its transition into a full democracy remains nowhere in sight.

Conclusion: The prospects of Hong Kong's democratization and its theoretical implications

The possible regime trajectories of Hong Kong

As pointed out by Wigell, democratization involves two separate processes of constitutional liberalization and electoral popularization and these two processes do not always go hand in hand.⁶¹ This implies that the trajectories of hybrid regimes can be diverse and they will not always follow a linear path towards full democracy.⁶² Against this theoretical backdrop, Hong Kong's democratization from British colonial times to the Chinese SAR period will certainly provide another illustrative case study showing the diverse trajectories of hybrid regimes. In the transitional period of the 1980s and 1990s, Hong Kong had gone through the process of constitutional liberalization, moving away from a colonial authoritarian regime into a liberal authoritarian regime with limited competitive election elements.⁶³ However, moving into the HKSAR period, Hong Kong has not been transitioning into a full democracy as predicted by the transitional paradigm, instead, as shown in this article, electoral authoritarian-style manipulations have become common in Hong Kong today pushing the city-state into a grey zone between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism.

Table 8. Business interests of media tycoons in Mainland China.

Media	Business family	Major investor/key person	Business conglomerate of the major investor/key person	Business assets ^a in Mainland China			
				Assets in Mainland China (in HK\$ million)	Assets in all other regions (in HK\$ million)	Total assets (in HK\$ million)	Percentage of assets in Mainland China (%)
<i>Television and radio</i>							
Cable TV	Woo Kwong-ching's family	Woo Kwong-ching, Chairman of the Wharf (Holdings) Limited	Wharf (Holdings) Limited	99,874	229,754	329,628	30.3
Asia Television	Cha Chi-man's family and Wang Zheng	Cha Mou-sing, Chairman of HKR International Limited	HKR International Limited	6,630	10,635	17,265	38.4
Now TV	Li Ka-shing's family	Li Tzar-kai, Chairman of PCCW Limited	PCCW Limited	6,605	1,831	8,436	78.3
Metro Radio Hong Kong	Li Ka-shing's family	Li Tzar-kuoi Vice-Chairman of Cheung Kong Holdings Limited and Hutchison Whampoa Limited	Hutchison Whampoa Limited	80,483	615,564	696,047	11.6
TVB	Chan Kwok-keung	Chan Kwok-keung, Chairman of ITC Properties ^b	ITC Properties Limited	533	1,295	1,828	29.2
<i>Newspapers</i>							
<i>Sing Tao Daily</i>	Ho Tsu-kwok's family	Ho Tsu-kwok, Chairman of Sing Tao News Corporation Limited	Sing Tao News Corporation Limited ^c	760	274	1,034	73.5
<i>Headline Daily</i>							
<i>The Standard</i>							
<i>Hong Kong Economic Journal</i>	Li Ka-shing's family	Li Tzar-kai, Chairman of PCCW Limited	PCCW Limited	6,605	1,831	8,436	78.3
<i>South China Morning Post</i>	Kuok Hock-nien's family	Kuok Hock-nien, holder of Kerry Properties Limited ^d	Kerry Properties Limited	64,982	40,201	105,183	61.8

^aThe figures quoted in this table are drawn from "non-current assets" or "non-financial assets" as disclosed by the companies in their 2013/2014 annual financial reports.

^bChan Kwok-keung acquired the majority stake of TVB through his private company Young Lion Holdings Limited in 2011.

^cIn its annual financial report the Sing Tao News Corporation reported its assets in Mainland China and Hong Kong under one single item and therefore the figures quoted in this table cover its assets in both Mainland China and Hong Kong.

^dKuok Hock-nien acquired the majority stake of the *South China Morning Post* through his Kerry Group Limited in 1993.

Source: Author's own research based on the annual financial reports of the companies as available in Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited's database "HKExNews" (http://www.hkexnews.hk/listedco/listconews/advancedsearch/search_active_main.aspx) [Accessed in December 2014].

Table 9. Prominent examples of self-censorship by the Hong Kong media.

Year	Media involved	Description
2012	<i>Sing Pao</i>	In March 2012, veteran China observer Lau Yui-siu complained that opinions of his commentary were twisted by <i>Sing Pao</i> editors. Mr Lau said his commentary was originally meant to be a rejection of both Chief Executive candidates Leung Chun-ying and Henry Tang, but his commentary was finally published under the headline: "Out of the two, I would rather choose Leung Chun-ying."
2014	<i>Ming Pao</i>	On 1 July 2014, the editorial team made the 1 July rally the front-page story and set the main headline and sub-headline as "Rally for universal suffrage turnout hits 10-year high" and "Hundreds rehearse Occupy Central, police start clearance procedures", respectively. When the newspapers were printing at midnight on 2 July, Editorial Director Lui Ka Ming ordered the printing process to be stopped and the two headlines amended without informing the editorial team. The wording "rally for universal suffrage" in the original main headline was deleted and the sub-headline was revised as the main headline which was changed to: "Hundreds rehearse Occupy Central, police clear protesters."
2014	TVB	On 15 October 2014, pro-democracy activist Ken Tsang was punched and kicked by seven police officers during a police clearance operation near Lung Wo Road and the whole incident was captured by a TVB news team. A news clip of the alleged beating was broadcast in TVB in the early hours of 15 October morning, with the reporter stating that the police carried Tsang "to a dark corner of Tamar Park, where he was placed on the ground and punched and kicked by the group". Shortly after the news clip was broadcast, news department head Keith Yuen ordered that it should be re-worded as "Officers carried him to a corner of Tamar Park. The officers eventually escorted the activist away." wording, including "dark" and "punched and kicked", in the original report was deleted.
2015	<i>Ming Pao</i>	On 2 February 2015, in a meeting, the editorial team decided that a confidential Canadian government report on the 4 June 1989 crackdown in Beijing would be adopted as the front-page story and the Chief Editor Chong Tien-siong made no objection to such a decision at the meeting. But later in the evening Chong decided to put this story on an inside page and adopt a much less sensitive story about Alibaba helping young Hong Kong people to start their own businesses, despite the strong opposition from the editorial team.

Source: Adapted from the Hong Kong Journalists Association's annual reports (various years), available at: <http://www.hkja.org.hk/site/portal/Site.aspx?id=L1-170&lang=en-US>.

The political saga surrounding the 2017 Chief Executive popular election has provided new hints about the prospects of Hong Kong's democratization. On 31 August 2014, the NPCSC decided that Hong Kong shall adopt a highly-controlled universal suffrage model for Chief Executive popular elections from 2017 onwards, by which Chief Executive hopefuls can only become formal candidates with the endorsement of over half of the members of the 1200-strong Nominating Committee and the composition of such a committee will be modelled on the existing Chief Executive Election Committee where pro-Beijing elites have a "built-in majority".⁶⁴ The actual result of such a model is to give Beijing the power to screen Chief Executive candidates before Hongkongese can exercise their rights to elect their head of government by universal suffrage, and democrats who are considered by Beijing as confrontational to the communist regime are unlikely to get nominated.⁶⁵ The democrats and their supporters considered the NPCSC's decision a "fake universal suffrage model" and subsequently a large-scale occupy movement broke out in protest to the NPCSC decision. On 18 June 2015, the pro-democracy legislators, who hold veto power to constitutional reform,⁶⁶ voted against the HKSAR government's proposal (which was developed on the basis of the NPCSC decision).⁶⁷

The pro-democracy camp's veto of Beijing's highly-controlled universal suffrage model implies that the future pathways of Hong Kong's political transition remain

Table 10. Hong Kong's ranking in international press freedom indices.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Hong Kong's global ranking (Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders)	18	56	34	39	58	61	51	48	34	54	54	58	61	70	69
Hong Kong's global ranking (Freedom of the Press Reports by Freedom House)	–	–	–	61	65	66	67	75	72	70	70	71	76	83	76
Hong Kong's media freedom status (Freedom of the Press Reports by Freedom House)	–	–	–	free	free	free	free	Partly free							

Source: Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index, Various Years (<https://rsf.org/en/hong-kong>); Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Reports, Various Years (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2005/hong-kong>).

uncertain. Clearly, I have no crystal ball to foretell the final destination of Hong Kong's political transition. But conceptually, there are four possible regime pathways for Hong Kong drawing upon Wigell's typology (Figure 5). The first possible scenario is moving backwards to full authoritarianism. Theoretically this scenario might come true if there existed serious contraction of both electoral popularization (for example, re-introduction of appointed seats in Legislative Council and District Council) and constitutional liberalization (further strengthening of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations in elections, opposition activities, and media). But this scenario, if it actually happened, would amount to the *de facto* termination of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong, which is still quite unlikely at the time of writing. The second possible scenario is moving towards full democracy. Theoretically this scenario might materialize if there were substantial expansion of both electoral popularization (implementation of universal suffrage for Chief Executive and Legislative Council elections) and constitutional liberalization (for example, lessening of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations in elections, opposition activities, and media). This scenario would happen if Beijing agreed to give the Hong Kong people full autonomy in governing the city-state. But given Beijing's longstanding insistence on preserving its governing power over the HKSAR for "national security" concerns, it appears inconceivable for the foreseeable future that Beijing would cede "no-restriction universal suffrage" to Hong Kong in combination with a competitive pro-democracy opposition, a vibrant civil society, and free media.⁶⁸ The third possible scenario of Hong Kong's political transition is moving towards a formal electoral authoritarian regime. This scenario would occur if Beijing further scaled back Hong Kong's civil liberties by strengthening its systematic manipulations of elections, opposition parties, and media on the one hand, and allowed substantial expansion of electoral popularization by putting in place some forms of competitive multiparty elections for Chief Executive and all seats of the Legislative Council, on the other hand. This scenario would happen if Beijing wanted to install some form of competitive popular elections so as to relieve local and international pressure for democracy while maintaining its ultimate control over the HKSAR through systematic manipulations. The last possible scenario is that Hong Kong

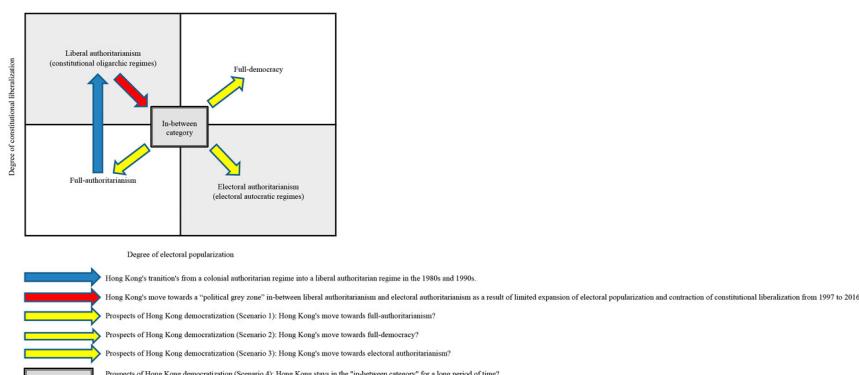


Figure 5. The possible regime trajectories of Hong Kong. Source: This graphic was adapted from O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*; Case, "Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness" and Wigell, "Mapping 'Hybrid Regimes'."

would stay in the current “political grey zone” in-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism for a long period of time. This scenario might happen if the pro-democracy opposition and civil society demonstrate their resilience to resist further contraction of civil liberty by Beijing on the one hand, while Beijing also resists introducing some form of competitive multiparty elections for the Chief Executive and all seats of the Legislative Council, on the other hand.

Comparative scholars have long asserted that hybrid regimes of different types are more vulnerable to political instability than full democracies and full authoritarianism due to the endless political confrontations between the incumbent and the opposition.⁶⁹ From this perspective, the unsettled political future of Hong Kong will certainly provide a fertile ground for continuous political conflicts between the opposition forces and the Beijing-backed HKSAR government and the remaining questions are when and how political crises will be stirred up in the years to come.

The case study of Hong Kong in comparative perspective

As far as comparative literature is concerned, the case of Hong Kong’s democratization, as presented in this article, has provided an illustrative case study to show the limitation of the “transitional paradigm” in East Asia’s context. Contrary to the prediction of the “transitional paradigm”, Hong Kong’s transition from full authoritarian rule into a liberal authoritarian regime (in the 1980s and 1990s under the final decades of British colonial rule) was not followed by a linear path moving towards full democracy (under Chinese sovereignty from 1997 to 2016). Indeed, the recent trend of electoral authoritarian-style manipulations has pushed Hong Kong into a grey zone between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism and its future regime trajectories remain open to various possibilities. The case of Hong Kong shows an overall agreement with the emerging literature about diverse trajectories of hybrid regimes as asserted by political scientists like Wigell, and Levitsky and Way.

More specifically, the case study of Hong Kong’s democratization will help enrich the existing comparative literature on democratization and hybrid regimes in two aspects. First, it broadens our understanding of hybrid regimes by developing a new category of “in-between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism”. Traditionally, liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism have been defined by political scientists as the two typical types of hybrid regimes. But the case of Hong Kong helps broaden our understanding of the political grey zone as some form of “continuum” by developing a new “in-between category”, which is characterized by a substantial degree of civil liberty, some elements of popular elections, and the prevalence of different kinds of electoral authoritarian-style controls. A deeper investigation of the applicability of this “in-between category” for other hybrid regimes will be a potential research topic for the future.

Second, the study of Hong Kong helps to enrich the democratization literature by offering an interesting case of a sub-national polity. The existing literature on hybrid regimes and electoral authoritarianism basically focuses on the level of sovereign states and it is implicitly or explicitly assumed that incumbent national governments are principal actors shaping the regime trajectories.⁷⁰ From this perspective, the case study of Hong Kong shows that its regime trajectory is principally shaped by the national government in Beijing rather than the sub-national government in Hong Kong under the framework of “One Country, Two Systems”. Indeed, the key driving

force that has pushed Hong Kong into the grey zone between liberal authoritarianism and electoral authoritarianism in recent years is clearly Beijing's decision to step up its political oversight of the city-state. Since the 1 July 2003 protest rally, Beijing has considered it necessary to contain the pro-democracy camp, as the democrats, in the eyes of Beijing leaders, are anti-China and there are "foreign forces" exercising noticeable influences behind them. To prevent Hong Kong from developing into an anti-communist base, Beijing decided to change its policy towards the HKSAR from non-interventionism in the initial years of the HKSAR period to active engagement after 2003.⁷¹ The Central Government Liaison Office (CGLO), which is the representative office of the Chinese government in the HKSAR, has been developed into a "second governing team" under Beijing's new policy (the "first governing team" refers to the HKSAR establishment comprising Chief Executive, principal officials, Executive Councillors, civil servants, etc.).⁷² It is obvious that many of the electoral authoritarian-style manipulations, particularly those in electoral⁷³ and media⁷⁴ arenas, are actually carried out under the shadow of the CGLO. While in many electoral authoritarian regimes incumbent governments will maintain a governing party as the organized machinery for thwarting opposition (for example, People's Action Party in Singapore and Barisan Nasional in Malaysia), in Hong Kong because the Chief Executive is prohibited by law from organizing a formal governing party⁷⁵ the CGLO has gradually transformed itself into an organized machinery for countering the pro-democracy opposition through electoral authoritarian-style manipulations. While Hong Kong (and also Macao) is quite unique given its sub-national status within an authoritarian sovereign state, it did enrich our understanding of hybrid regimes and offers democratization researchers new theoretical and empirical insights.

Notes

1. Diamond, "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes."
2. Gobel, "Semiauthoritarianism."
3. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*.
4. Case, "Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness"; Wigell, "Mapping 'Hybrid Regimes'."
5. Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, 25.
6. Ekman, "Political Participation and Regime Stability."
7. Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm."
8. Wigell, "Mapping 'Hybrid Regimes'."
9. Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, 37.
10. Allan, "Liberalism, Democracy and Hong Kong."
11. Lau and Kuan, "Between Liberal Autocracy and Democracy."
12. Davies, "The Basic Law and Democratization in Hong Kong."
13. Lau and Kuan, "Between Liberal Autocracy and Democracy."
14. Case, "Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness."
15. Zhang, "Beijing's 2007 Political Reform Plan."
16. Wigell, "Mapping 'Hybrid Regimes'."
17. Local scholars Case and Wong both mention the electoral authoritarian elements of Hong Kong politics. Case has argued that in the wake of the competition between Donald Tsang and Alan Leong in the 2007 Chief Executive election, Hong Kong has evolved into a liberal authoritarian regime with some electoral authoritarianism elements. Wong has examined the electoral-authoritarian nature of District Council and Legislative Council elections. The author has been inspired by both Case and Wong in the process of writing this article. See Case, "Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness"; Wong, "Resources Disparity and Multi-Level Elections"; Wong, *Electoral Politics*.

18. Hale adopted a terminology, namely SCEAOMIDD, that is, semi-/competitive/electoral authoritarianism or managed/illiberal/delegative democracy. See Hale, "Hybrid Regimes."
19. Ibid.
20. Some forms of electoral manipulation have been built-in by Beijing within the HKSAR system so as to undermine pro-democracy opposition within the legislature. First, the electoral system for geographic constituencies was changed from a "single-member constituency system" into a "proportional representation system" in 1998 so as to contain the number of seats to be captured by pro-democracy opposition. Second, functional constituencies have been installed to occupy half of the seats, so that the HKSAR government could have stable support from business-professional legislators returned by functional constituencies. Third, Article 74 of the Basic Law restricts legislators from introducing private member bills, while Annex II specifies that all non-government bills and motions require a double majority of functional constituency and geographic constituency members. These provisions have basically deprived pro-democracy legislators of their powers to suggest legislative proposals. For the purpose of this article the author would focus on those manipulative "practices." For details about the design of the HKSAR electoral system, see Lau, "The Making of the Electoral System."
21. Hale, "Hybrid Regimes."
22. Case, "Southeast Asia's Hybrid Regimes."
23. Fong, "The Partnership."
24. Because there is no party law in Hong Kong, political parties are usually registered as "companies" under the Company Ordinance and they are not obliged to disclose details of any donations received. But it is clear that most of the donations of the DAB come from pro-Beijing businessmen. For example, at its 2014 fundraising dinner the DAB received HK\$13.8 million from property tycoon Hui Wing-mau who made a bid for a piece of calligraphy by Zhang Xiaoming, Director of the Central Government Liaison Office. That night another group of businessmen donated HK\$11 million to the DAB by making a bid for Zhang Xiaoming to sing a song. See *South China Morning Post*, "The Price of Success."
25. Hong Kong media has coined a term, "Ser Zai Beng Zhong," which in Chinese literally means "snake feasts," "vegetarian meals," "mooncakes," and "rice dumplings," to describe the various spoils provided by pro-government parties to grassroots voters.
26. Anonymous interviews with a senior pro-democracy politician on 21 May 2013 and a senior pro-Beijing politician on 23 October 2014.
27. Hale, "Hybrid Regimes."
28. Case, "Southeast Asia's Hybrid Regimes."
29. *Apple Daily*, "Vote-rigging."
30. *Ming Pao*, "400-Inch Warehouse Registered 11 Voters with Different Surnames (in Chinese)."
31. *Ming Pao*, "Nearly a Hundred Voters Registered in a Construction Site (in Chinese)."
32. *Apple Daily*, "Phantom Voters Registered in a Vacated Flat (in Chinese)."
33. *Apple Daily*, "Sudden Increase of 93 Voters in Cambridge Nursing Homes, Half of Them Have No Cognitive Ability (in Chinese)."
34. Hale, "Hybrid Regimes."
35. In the 2008 Legislative Council election, the pro-government Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions had mobilized its members to vote for Priscilla Leung. See Chou, "Elections in Hong Kong." Similarly, in the 2012 Legislative Council election Paul Tse openly admitted that the CGLO canvassed votes for him. See *Mingpao*, "Paul Tse Admitted CGLO Canvassed Votes for Him (in Chinese)."
36. Loh, *Underground Front*, 231.
37. *Mingpao*, "88 Candidates Declared "Independent" But Active in Pro-government Organizations (in Chinese)."
38. Choy, "Reason Behind the Defeat."
39. Levitsky and Way, "Why Democracy Needs a Level Playing Field."
40. For example, in Singapore and Malaysia, civil society organizations which have not been officially registered are barred from participating in any political activities and social activists could be detained without trial under the Internal Security Acts. See Case, "Southeast Asia's Hybrid Regimes."
41. Hale, "Hybrid Regimes."

42. For example, in Venezuela under Chavez, a quasi-partisan force, namely Bolivarian Circles, was sponsored by the Chavez administration to defend government policies and intimidate opposition figures. See Corrales, “Venezuela.”
43. For example, in Venezuela under Chavez, citizens have been placed under legal investigation for political treason due to their participation in anti-government protests. See Corrales, “Venezuela.”
44. For example, in the 2000 Zimbabwe presidential election Mugabe pressurized opposition candidates, civil society groups, and independent media by resorting to detention, displacement, and violence. See Schedler, “The Menu of Manipulation.”
45. *South China Morning Post*, “Marchers in Show of Support for Leung.”
46. *South China Morning Post*, “Determined Hecklers Shut Down Forum.”
47. Anonymous interview with a senior pro-Beijing politician on 23 October 2014.
48. In Hong Kong, protests are governed by the Public Order Ordinance, which stipulates a regime of “prior permission” requiring organizers to notify the police seven days in advance and to obtain a “notice of no objection”. See Human Rights Watch, *Submission by Human Rights Watch*.
49. Anonymous interview with a human rights observer on 7 June 2013; *South China Morning Post*, “Record Number Prosecuted Under Tough Public Order Ordinance.”
50. *Standard*, “Alliance Five Slam.”
51. For more details, see the Hong Kong Journalists Association’s annual reports (various years), available at: <http://www.hkja.org.hk/site/portal/Site.aspx?id=L1-170&lang=en-US>.
52. Levitsky and Way, “Why Democracy Needs a Level Playing Field”; Hale, “Hybrid Regimes.”
53. Levitsky and Way, “Why Democracy Needs a Level Playing Field.”
54. Case, “Southeast Asia’s Hybrid Regimes.”
55. Ma Ngok, “State-Press Relationship.”
56. Apart from the media owned by pro-Beijing tycoons as shown in Table 5, the heads of three traditional leftist newspapers, namely *Wen Wei Po*, *Ta Kung Pao*, and *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*, are regular CPPCC members.
57. China’s internet giant Alibaba Group announced in December 2015 that it had bought the *South China Morning Post*, representing a more direct reach by Beijing into the Hong Kong media arena. See *The Wall Street Journal*, “Alibaba to Buy South China Morning Post.”
58. The major exception is Jimmy Lai of Next Media Group, who owns and publishes *Apply Daily* and *Next Magazine*. Both publications are considered by the Chinese government as unfriendly media. See Loh, *Underground Front*, 217–218.
59. Anonymous interview with a senior journalist on 14 June 2013 and a senior pro-Beijing politician by the author on 23 October 2014.
60. Schedler, Andreas, “The Logic.”
61. Wigell, “Mapping ‘Hybrid Regimes’.”
62. Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*.
63. Case, “Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness.”
64. *Economist*, “Political City.”
65. *Economist*, “The Struggle for Hong Kong.”
66. Under the Basic Law, constitutional reform proposals must be passed by a two-thirds majority of the Legislative Council, signed by the Chief Executive and endorsed by the NPCSC. The pro-democracy legislators now occupy more than one-third of seats in the legislature and thus hold veto power.
67. *Economist*, “A Snub to the Party.”
68. Case, “Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness.”
69. Goldstone et al., “A Global Model”; Case, “Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness.”
70. For example, the hybrid regimes covered by Levitsky and Way’s study are all sovereign states.
71. For an account of the change of Beijing’s policy towards Hong Kong, see Cheng, “The Story.”
72. Cheung, “The Changing Relations.”
73. The CGLO, through its internal bureaucracies such as the Island Work Department, Kowloon Work Department, and New Territories Work Department, will coordinate the campaigns of the pro-government camp, ranging from nurturing candidates, planning campaign strategies, and calling upon Mainland enterprises to contribute donations, to supporting daily constituency

services of pro-government candidates and mobilizing voters during election days. See Loh, *Underground Front*, 209; Cheung, "The Changing Relations."

74. Based on the author's anonymous interviews with a China observer on 17 May 2013 and a senior journalist on 14 June 2013, it is comprehensible that the Department of Publicity, Cultural and Sports Affairs of the CGLO is responsible for "managing" the local media by means of arranging for senior media managers to visit Beijing, exerting pressure on editors for "unfriendly news reports" through phone calls and dinners, and blacklisting "disobedient reporters" for covering official events in Mainland China. An actual case involved the shutting down of the Digital Broadcasting Corporation (DBC) in 2012. In this incident, DBC major investor Wong Chobau, a pro-Beijing businessman, refused to inject more funding into the radio station because the CGLO wanted to stop the recruitment of an outspoken and pro-democracy programme host Lee Wai-ling. For details, see *South China Morning Post*, "Urgent Meeting Fails to Save DBC"; *South China Morning Post*, "Tape Proves Beijing Interfered in Radio Saga."

75. Section 31 of Chief Executive Election Ordinance provides that the winning candidate of the Chief Executive election must make a statutory declaration that he is not a member of a political party.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Bibliography

Allan, J. "Liberalism, Democracy and Hong Kong." *Hong Kong Law Journal* 28, no. 2 (1998): 156–168.

Apple Daily. *Vote-Rigging: One Flat, 7 Surnames and 13 Votes (in Chinese)*. 21 November, A01, 2011.

Apple Daily. *Phantom Voters Registered in a Vacated Flat (in Chinese)*. 16 June, A02, 2012.

Apple Daily. "10 Years of 'Ser Zai Beng Zhong' Have Undermined the Support Base of Democrats (in Chinese)." 22 June, A08, 2013.

Apple Daily. *Sudden Increase of 93 Voters in Cambridge Nursing Homes, Half of Them Have No Cognitive Ability (in Chinese)*. 16 December, A04, 2015.

Apple Daily, "Increase in Voters in Elderly Care Homes Key to Election Success for Establishment Candidates (in Chinese)." 16 December, A04, 2015.

Carothers, Thomas. "The End of the Transition Paradigm." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 5–21.

Case, William. "Southeast Asia's Hybrid Regimes: When Do Voters Change Them?" *Journal of East Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2005): 215–237. doi:10.1017/S1598240800005750.

Case, William. "Hybrid Politics and New Competitiveness: Hong Kong's 2007 Chief Executive Election." *East Asia* 25, no. 4 (2008): 365–388.

Cheng, Jie. "The Story of a New Policy." *Hong Kong Journal*. Fall, 2009.

Cheung, Peter T. Y. "The Changing Relations Between Hong Kong and the Mainland Since 2003." In *Contemporary Hong Kong Government and Politics*, edited by Lam Wai-man, Percy Luen-tim Lui, and Wilson Wong, 2nd ed., 325–347. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

Chou, Bill K. P. "Elections in Hong Kong: International Perspectives and Implications for China." In *China and East Asia: After the Wall Street Crisis*, edited by Lam Peng Er, Qin Yaqing and Yang Mu, 75–100. Singapore, NJ: World Scientific, 2013.

Choy, Ivan Chi-keung. "Reason Behind the Defeat of Pro-democracy Camp: The End of the 60%–40% Ratio (in Chinese)." *Ming Pao*, 11 September, A32, 2012.

Corrales, Javier. "Venezuela: Petro-Politics and the Promotion of Disorder." In *Undermining Democracy: 21st Century Authoritarians*, edited by Christopher Walker, 65–80. Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2009.

Davies, Michael C. "The Basic Law and Democratization in Hong Kong." *Chicago International Law Review* 3, no. 2 (2006): 165–185.

Diamond, Larry. "Thinking About Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 21–35.

Economist. *Political City: Denied Free Elections, Hong Kong's Democrats Plan, Reluctantly, for Protest*, 2014a. <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21615636-denied-free-elections-hong-kongs>

democrats-plan-reluctantly-protest-political-city?zid = 306&ah = 1b164dbd43b0cb27ba0d4c3b12a5e227.

Economist. *The Struggle for Hong Kong*, 2014b. <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21615583-territories-citizens-must-not-give-up-demanding-full-democracyfor-their-sake-and?zid = 306&ah = 1b164dbd43b0cb27ba0d4c3b12a5e227>.

Economist. *A Snub to the Party: Legislators Veto China's Plans for Political Change*, 2014c. <http://www.economist.com/news/21654624-legislators-veto-chinas-plans-political-change-snub-party?zid = 306&ah = 1b164dbd43b0cb27ba0d4c3b12a5e227>.

Ekman, Joakim. "Political Participation and Regime Stability: A Framework for Analyzing Hybrid Regimes." *Democratization* 30, no. 1 (2009): 7–31.

Fong, Brian C. H. "The Partnership Between Chinese Government and Hong Kong's Capitalist Class: Implications for HKSAR Governance, 1997–2012." *The China Quarterly* 217 (2014): 195–220. doi:10.1017/S0305741014000307.

Gobel, Christian. "Semiauthoritarianism." In *21st Century Political Science: A Reference Handbook*, edited by John T. Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning, 258–266. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011.

Goldstone, J. A., Bates, R. H., Epstein, D. L., Gurr, T. R., Lustik, M. B., Marshall, M. G., Ulfelder, J., & Woodward, M. "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability." *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 1 (2010): 190–208.

Hale, E. Henry. "Hybrid Regimes: When Democracy and Autocracy Mix." In *The Dynamics of Democratization: Dictatorship, Development, and Diffusion*, edited by Nathan J. Brown, 23–45. H Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Human Rights Watch. *Submission by Human Rights Watch to the UN Human Rights Committee on the Implementation of the ICCPR in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China*, 2013. <http://www.ccpccentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/HumanRightsWatch-HongKong.pdf>.

Lau, Siu-kai. "The Making of the Electoral System." In *Power Transfer and Electoral Politics: The First Legislative Election in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*, edited by Kuan Hsin-chi, Lau Siu-kai, Timothy Ka-ying Wong and Louie Kin-sheun, 3–35. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1999.

Lau, Sui-kai, and Kuan Hsin-chi. "Between Liberal Autocracy and Democracy: Democratic Legitimacy in Hong Kong." *Democratization* 9, no. 4 (2002): 58–76.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010a.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. "Why Democracy Needs a Level Playing Field." *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 1 (2010b): 57–68.

Loh, Christine. *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010.

Ma Ngok. "State-Press Relationship in Post-1997 Hong Kong: Constant Negotiation Amidst Self-Restraint." *The China Quarterly* 192 (2007): 949–970.

Ming Pao. *400-Inch Warehouse Registered 11 Voters with Different Surnames (in Chinese)*. 25 November, A02, 2011.

Mingpao. *Paul Tse Admitted CGLO Canvassed Votes for Him (in Chinese)*. 31 December, A04, 2012.

Ming Pao. *Nearly a Hundred Voters Registered in a Construction Site (in Chinese)*. 26 November, A02, 2013.

Mingpao. *88 Candidates Declared "Independent" but Active in Pro-government Organizations (in Chinese)*. 25 October, A01, 2015.

O'Donnell, Guillermo, and Philippe C. Schmitter. *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Schedler, Andreas. "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 36–50.

Schedler, Andreas. "The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism." In *Electoral Authoritarianism: the Dynamics of Unfree Competition*, edited by Andreas Schedler, 1–23. Boulder, CO: L. Rienner Publishers, 2006.

South China Morning Post. *Marchers in Show of Support for Leung*. 31 December, CITY1, 2012a.

South China Morning Post. *Record Number Prosecuted Under Tough Public Order Ordinance*. 10 November, EDT1, 2012b.

South China Morning Post. *Urgent Meeting Fails to Save DBC*. 10 October, CITY1, 2012c.

South China Morning Post. *Tape Proves Beijing Interfered in Radio Saga*. 21 October, EDT3, 2012d.

South China Morning Post. *Determined Hecklers Shout Down Forum*. 8 April, CITY2, 2013.

South China Morning Post. *The Price of Success? HK\$13.8 m.* 17 April, CITY4, 2014.

Standard. *Alliance Five Slam – “Political Charges” Over Rowdy Demo.* 12 March, P11, 2010.

The Wall Street Journal. *Alibaba to Buy South China Morning Post*, 11 December, 2015.

Wigell, Mikael. “Mapping ‘Hybrid Regimes’: Regime Types and Concepts in Comparative Politics.” *Democratization* 15, no. 2 (2008): 230–250.

Wong, Stan Hok-wui. “Resources Disparity and Multi-Level Elections in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes: Regression Discontinuity Evidence From Hong Kong.” *Electoral Studies* 33 (2014): 200–219.

Wong, Stan Hok-wui. *Electoral Politics in Post-1997 Hong Kong: Protest, Patronage, and the Media*. Singapore: Springer, 2015.

Zhang, Baozhi. “Beijing’s 2007 Political Reform Plan and Prospects for Hong Kong’s Democratization.” *Democratization* 17, no. 3 (2010): 442–464.